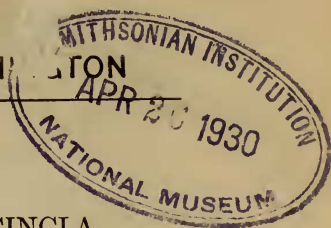


PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTONTHE GLORIOSA RACE OF IXOCINCLA
MADAGASCARIENSIS.BY HERBERT FRIEDMANN.¹

Some months ago Mr. Hermann Grote called my attention to the fact that the bird described by Ridgway (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. xvi, 1893, p. 597) as *Ixocincla madagascariensis rostrata* was said to inhabit Aldabra and Gloriosa Islands, and that inasmuch as all the islands off the east coast of Africa, such as the Comoro group, the Seychelles, Mauritius, etc., are inhabited by distinct races, he wondered if Gloriosa birds were really identical with those from Aldabra (type locality of *rostrata*). On looking through the literature I find that Grote's hesitancy in regarding the birds of Gloriosa as true *rostrata* is not without reason. In fact, two years after describing *rostrata*, Ridgway (*ibid*, xviii, 1895, p. 525) lists Gloriosa birds as only questionably of this race. He writes that, ". . . owing to their bad condition of plumage, I have not been able to make out satisfactorily whether the Gloriosa and Aldabra birds of this species are really different or not." The series from Aldabra (the type and three other birds) are all in fresh plumage, while the three specimens from Gloriosa are all extremely abraded, making plumage comparisons difficult. The collector, Dr. W. L. Abbott, noted that the birds of Gloriosa Island have an entirely different call from that of the closely allied group on Aldabra.

I have compared the two series and find that the Gloriosa birds have constantly larger bills than do typical, Aldabra specimens. The wing and tail measurements are fairly similar, allowing for the difference in wear. The bill character, together with the knowledge that the Gloriosa birds differ in

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habits from those of Aldabra, justifies their taxonomic separation. The Gloriosa birds I take pleasure in naming after Mr. Grote, who first suggested that they might represent an undescribed form.

Ixocincla madagascariensis grotei, subsp. nov.

Type.—U. S. Nat. Mus. 128664, adult male in worn plumage, collected on Gloriosa Island, 26 January, 1893, by Dr. W. L. Abbott.

Subspecific characters.—Similar to *rostrata* but with longer, stronger bill, the culmen 27 mm. in the male, 25.5–26 mm. in the females, as against 25.5 mm. in the male of *rostrata* and 24–24.5 mm. in the female of the latter form. Also the bill wholly bright orange red in life in *grotei*, while in *rostrata* it is orange red only for its basal half, and dusky, almost blackish, towards the tip. This character is not well shown in dried skins, but the collector noted this feature on the label of each of the seven birds collected, so it seems to be fairly constant.

The dimensions of the series examined are as follows:

<i>Form</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Wing</i>	<i>Tail</i>	<i>Culmen</i>
<i>rostrata</i>	Aldabra (type)	♂	112	101.5	25.5
do	do	♀	106	97.0	24.5
do	do	♀	110	100.0	24.0
do	do	—	109	95.0	24.0
<i>grotei</i>	Gloriosa (type)	♂	109	95.0	27.0
do	do	♀	110	97.0	26.0
do	do	♀	110	95.0	25.5

Remarks.—In the original description of *rostrata* (*cit. supra*) Ridgway states that it is, “. . . similar to true *I. madagascariensis*, but larger, the bill especially, and coloration paler.” The bill character is based wholly on the Gloriosa birds, and the generally larger size I find does not hold true. If anything, *rostrata* averages slightly smaller than typical *madagascariensis*, of which race I have examined some 13 specimens. The only reliable character by which *rostrata* differs from *madagascariensis* is in the paler coloration of the former, which has the underparts more brownish, less grayish than in the latter.

Neumann (Orn. Monatsb., xxxiv, 1926, pp. 110–111) has recently described a whitish-bellied race, *albiventris*, from Anjouan Island, and has referred the present species to the genus *Microscelis* as he finds no noteworthy differences between it and *Ixocincla*. There can be no question but that the two are closely allied, but I prefer not to go into this matter without more extensive material of all the forms of both genera.